



Proposed 2026 Census data products feedback survey

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Results expected 30 Dec 2025

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We asked

In preparation for the 2026 Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been reviewing the data products and outputs from the 2021 Census to ensure they meet the needs of the modern data user. In May 2025, the ABS released a paper '[Proposed 2026 Census data products](#)' which communicated the recommended suite of products, based off consultation held over the preceding 18 months.

To understand how these proposed products would meet data user needs, the ABS conducted a consultation exercise through the Consultation Hub, seeking feedback on the proposed changes. It was open for 3 weeks, to all members of the public, and respondents could be anonymous if they wished.

You said

Over the 3-week period, the ABS received survey submissions from 146 data users. Representation amongst the respondents covered individuals, members from all levels of government, academics, those working in community organisations as well as private enterprise. Feedback showed data users were

mostly pleased by the proposed products and their enhancements, though many were concerned by the prospect of Community Profiles no longer being produced, and thus, data becoming less accessible for community groups.

Some key points from the feedback include:

Community Profiles

Community Profiles have been a reliable and consistent package of geography-specific data that users have valued being able to download and share. Data users valued its standard format, and it being an accurate source of information, no matter their level of statistical skills.

The Time Series Profile continues to be a critical product to those who rely on it, and some are concerned it won't be retained.

It was noted that Community Profiles is less useful to those seeking summary data, finding QuickStats more suitable, and when more complex tables were needed, Community Profiles often misses the mark by providing more cross-tabulations than necessary, resulting in data users creating custom tables in TableBuilder instead.

TableBuilder

TableBuilder has offered data users the option to control the data they need, by way of building custom tables, but many Community Profiles users are daunted by the tool's complexity. Some lack the confidence to accurately reproduce what is currently contained in the Community Profiles, and others point to its functionality being less user friendly, along with the expected impact on their time.

QuickStats

QuickStats is largely considered the go-to product for many, and feedback welcomed its suite of data being expanded to cover more of what Community Profiles offered.

The proposed enhancements which covered the Table expander, Topic filter navigation and the inclusion of visualisations were all well received, along with the sharing options, citation, embedding and download/print functionality.

Geospatial tool

The proposed new tool through which data users can access both DataPacks and GeoPackages, with the addition of an ArcGIS map interface, was widely regarded as a positive step forward, removing the barrier for data users currently without access to mapping software, and enabling browsing tables and maps before needing to extract data.

Some were keen to learn more about its API functionality, and general feedback

showed great interest in understanding more as its development continues.

Some data users who rely on DataPacks were unsure of it being retained and noted their desire for it to remain mostly unchanged where possible.

We did

In response to the feedback, we are reviewing plans for the data, the products, and their supporting materials. Respondents to the survey could opt-in for future discussions about the proposed products, and the ABS is currently engaging with some respondents, to gain practical insights into their use of Community Profiles, as well as the other products. These conversations will inform an assessment of the impact these proposed changes may have and consequently, design considerations.

We remain committed to releasing quality data products and appreciate the time and effort users have contributed so far. The ABS plans to produce advice on final developments to the 2026 Census data products suite later this year, with the aim to spread awareness and ensure users have sufficient time to prepare for the exciting changes. The ABS is grateful for the participation of so many, and we look forward to sharing with you our progress towards 2026 Census data release.

Any questions?

Please email census.data@abs.gov.au with any questions on this consultation or for further information.

Overview

In preparation for the 2026 Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has proposed some key changes to the existing Census suite of products. This survey will allow you to provide feedback on these proposed changes, which include, but are not limited to:

- No longer producing Community Profiles
- QuickStats being enhanced with more data and additional features
- DataPacks and GeoPackages being made available in a new tool
- Time series data being made available in TableBuilder

This survey will be open between 12 May and 26 May 2025.

A paper has been provided which details these proposed changes more fully, and can be accessed here: [Proposed 2026 Census data products](#)

What happens next

Census data users can expect the ABS to produce advice on final changes to the 2026 Census data products suite later this year, with the aim to spread awareness and ensure users have sufficient time to prepare for any impacts.

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